3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

stones are collected by the Arabs of Kordofan about the numerous mountains there. The amount of labour required to work them into the proper shape accounts for their high value, as well as their scarcity among the Shilluks.

A Shilluk man hardly leaves his home without carrying a spear or two, and a club. They have two kinds of spears, one whose blade has the form of a laurel-leaf, another with a cylindric blade, ending in a sharp point, the surface being either smooth or barbed. The shafts are of common wood without any ornaments. The spears often have a tuft of short ostrich feathers or of wool, near the butt. The cylindrical (round) spears are used not only as arms, but also in fishing. Besides the spears, they have two species of clubs, at least one of which a man always carries with him. One is simply a thick stick about one meter long, and heavy at one end. The other is about two feet and a half long, made in one solid piece of hard, heavy wood, with a big round knob at one end.

The Shilluks are a haughty, proud people. They are much inclined to consider themselves and everything belonging to them as superior to the strangers, including the white men. "The things of the Shilluks are good, and the things of the strangers are bad", is a common saying among them. They do not in any way want the foreigners and their mode of life. This strong disinclination is not only due to their innate character, but also to the evil experiences they have had with Arabs, Turks, Abyssinians, the Dervishes etc.

The well-founded feeling of suspicion and even of contempt for white people will grow less intensive or may disappear altogether in consequence of the peaceful intercourse they now have with the representatives of the white race. In conversing with a white man they at the best treat him as their equal, but hardly ever as their superior. It requires therefore considerable tact to deal with them. Once having gained confidence they are frank, open-minded, and always ready for a joke, but they are also quickly offended.

As warriors the Shilluks are brave; they make excellent soldiers in colonial troops, and are renowned as the best soldiers in the Sudan; generally they become really attached to their leaders, whether white or black.

Working for the white man is done only in times of dearth, when no food is obtainable in other ways. But in spite of this difficulty the mission has, during the last few years, had remarkable results in educating the natives to regular voluntary work. — If one sees a Shilluk standig for an hour or longer almost without ever moving, except now and then scratching his head or chewing his tooth-stick, or if one meets them lying in the ashes of the village place for hours together, one might believe them to be an extremely lazy people. But this would be only partly right. Indeed during the dry season they have not much work

5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

105 there are diviners of various sorts, seers and holy men, called *ajuigo*. Such people may also be priests of the Nyikang cult, but in themselves they do not form part of any organized religious system embracing the whole kingdom. There is said to be no cult of the divine being *Juok*, who is approached through Nyikang and the Shilluk kings.[1]

Myths of Origin and Traditional History

101 In considering the Shilluk apprehension of order in their universe, we may first suggest how they classify themselves and other people with whom they have been in contact. The name 'Shilluk,' used by most authorities, seems to be an Arab form of their own name for themselves, *Col* or *Ocolo*, or 'the children of *Col*'. They call their country 'the land of *Col*',[2] but it is also spoken of as 'the land of Nyikang', and they may refer to themselves as Okang, which is possibly derived from the name of their leader. All those 173 who now are Shilluk and live in Shilluk country do not think that they had a common origin. Some of them think that they came originally with Nyikang, and others that they are descended from people who in one way or another Nyikang eventually incorporated into his kingdom. The most 173 detailed and circumstantial of Shilluk myths are about the origin of the 829 present internal organization of the Shilluk kingdom. Less detailed stories, which nevertheless seem, for the Shilluk, to have something of the intrinsic ●186 validity which we attach to history, are told in order to assimilate to the Shilluk world their knowledge of other Nilotic peoples. In their accounts of their own history, and of their relationship with other Nilotes, we find an interest in process, which is absent from their accounts of their relations with other peoples outside their system. This in itself might be expected, though it might have been supposed that the long period during which they have been in contact with non-Nilotic peoples would have generated more elaborate aetiological stories to explain the presence and customs of quite foreign human beings. Even within the Nilotic world Shilluk stories of their relationship with the Luo of the Bahr-el-Ghazal, with whom they can have had only the most casual and occasional contact for many years, are a great deal more circumstantial than those of their original relationship with the Dinka, who are among their nearest neighbours. They thus have traditions of relationship which do more than account for their social relations at the present day, and which have not been modified to accord with them. There is some indication that they value the knowledge of historical tradition for its own sake.

Shilluk classification of the peoples with whom they have been in contact, or of whom they know, may briefly be described as follows. Differences of function, status, and origin within the Shilluk kingdom are ultimately attributed to Nyikang, or to one of his successors, the early Shilluk kings.

[1] This very brief survey of those features of Shilluk social organization necessary for an understanding of their cosmology is drawn from many sources, which I have not thought it necessary to cite individually.

[2] Westermann, 1912, *et al.*

5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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Differences and divisions between the Shilluk and other Nilotic peoples are attributed to differences between Nyikang and others who are thought to have been once closely associated with him. Differences between the Shilluk and people whose culture and system of thought are quite unlike their own are attributed to an ubiquitous God, *juok*. Leaving aside for the moment the Shilluk classification of people within their own kingdom, I mention briefly some of the stories referring to the relationship between the Shilluk and some other Nilotes, and between the Shilluk and foreign invaders.

According to one Shilluk tradition,[1] in the original migration from their first homeland, 'the land of Duwat', the Shilluk were with their leader Nyikang, and with them were the Dinka led by Dengdit, the Anuak led by Gilo, and the Luo led by Odimo. There are various versions of this story, and the presence of Odimo in it is inconsistent with other stories about him. The kin relationship supposed to exist between the leaders also varies from one account to another. In this version, the Anuak first broke away, and then the Dinka, and finally, when the Shilluk were on the fringes of the country they now occupy, the Luo turned away towards the Bahr-el-Ghazal. The story shows some idea of successive developments in a necessary chronological order, and the stories of the relationship of the Shilluk with the Luo contain circumstantial details, some of which are confirmed in independent accounts given by the Luo themselves.[2] These are people who are thought to have been involved in Shilluk history from very early times; we are not given any indication that the Shilluk attempt to account for their existence, but only that they themselves account for their relationship with the Shilluk. It is not so with the stories about white and brown people. One tells, for example, how it was that God (*juok*) came to help the *turuk*, the Turk or European,[3] rather than others of his sons, the people of Darfur, the Abyssinians, and the Shilluk, who were afraid or refused to approach him.[4] Another version, found also among other Nilotic peoples, attributes the success of the light-skinned people both to superior guile on their part, and to some preference shown them by God. We are also told that when God began to make men, he made them from light-coloured clay, until his hands became dirty towards the end of his task, and he then made the Shilluk, who lost their equality with the light-skinned people.[5] Like other Nilotes, the Shilluk seem to have singled out writing and guns as the gifts with which God gave supremacy to the foreigners;[6] and Shilluk songs recorded by Hofmayr[7] suggest that circumcision has come to stand for much that is contemptible in foreign custom and

[1] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 14.

[2] J. P. Crazzolara, 1950, has tried to build up the traditions of the Luo (Lwoo)-speaking peoples into a connected history.

[3] Though Turks, Arabs, and Europeans can be verbally distinguished from each other in Shilluk, Europeans, particularly when they are officials, are often called *turuk*.

[4] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 241.

[5] Ibid., p. 207.

[6] Westermann, 1912.

[7] 1925, pp. 460 ff.

5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

behaviour. Although there are many Shilluk names by which non-Nilotic foreigners may be distinguished from each other, they are also classed together as *obwonyo* (foreigners), a word also used for a reddish millet,[1] and as such they are distinguished collectively from Nilotic peoples who are not included in this category. The Nuba (*dongo* or *dhongo*)[2] seem to occupy a special position among foreigners, for Nyikang himself established a relationship with them by marrying his daughter to a Nuba.

As the Shilluk see it, the other Nilotes were separated from them in the course of a common history. To explain the presence and dominance of foreigners from outside their Nilotic world, they have stories of a metaphysical kind, positing some special act of God. These stories have clearly been invented in recent times for purely explanatory purposes. Shilluk interest in foreigners, as shown in myth and song, centres primarily on the way in which they have been opposed by Nyikang and the Shilluk, and the more they can be subordinated to Nyikang, the more they are assimilated to Shilluk tradition. Thus, it seems that the fighting with the invaders of their country in fairly recent times has, for the Shilluk, little of the imaginative significance which they attach to superficially trivial incidents in the lives of their early kings. If Hofmayr's derivation[3] of the word *obwonyo* (foreigner) is correct, the Shilluks' first national enemy, whom Nyikang urged them to resist, gave their name to others who followed. Nyikang and his successors, the Shilluk kings, are thought to have been the leaders of opposition to such national enemies. Nyikang both relates the Shilluk to other Nilotes whom they know, and focuses their hostility to attacks on their national integrity and exclusiveness. He represents, in this and other ways which may later be considered, the specifically Shilluk way of life and thought.

The Order of the World and Society

The order of Shilluk society is best approached by a consideration of the myths of migration under Nyikang, for some features of Shilluk society are thought to have originated in that period. Some of the details of these myths cannot be fully understood without a preliminary knowledge of the main natural divisions of the Shilluk world. Writers on the Shilluk do not report any story of an original state of chaos, in the strict sense, when man, earth, and sky were together in one undifferentiated whole, though such stories exist among the Dinka. There are Shilluk stories which do seem to suggest that at one time the world was not differentiated as it now is. For

[1] J. A. Heasty, 1937; Westermann, 1912, p. 248, transliterates the word for red millet slightly differently from the word for foreigners. Hofmayr, 1925, says that the word is derived from *ya puny*, the name originally given by the Shilluk to the Fung, with whom they were in early contact. Another word for the Fung, said to include the people of Sennar generally, is *cai*.

[2] Heasty, 1937, *et al.* *Dongo* probably means 'hill-people'. In a hymn quoted by Hofmayr 1925, p. 7, the Fung or the people of Sennar are referred to as *dongo cai*.

[3] See note 1.

5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

example, it is said that[1] originally God (*juok*) had the people in his land, until they ate fruit which made them sick, and God therefore sent them away. Another story tells that there was once a road to the moon which men could use, but they became too heavy to do so, in circumstances which are not here relevant.[2] Yet another story[3] tells how the sun and moon used to live together, until they quarrelled and therefore are no longer together. In some Shilluk myths (to be considered later) it is said that some men were not differentiated from animals and other creatures. There is thus the implication, though it may be conveyed in stories which are perhaps not told very seriously, that some things which were once together are now apart. The broadest division of the space around them recognized by the Shilluk is between what is above (the sky) and what is below (the earth). There is a Shilluk riddle which runs: 'What are the two half-round things (in Shilluk, *opunne*, literally 'loaves') of God (*juok*)?' and the answer is 'heaven and earth'. Hofmayr gives the explanation that 'the form in which this is figured is that of a loaf of bread'.[4] Besides sky and earth, there is the river, a third main region of the Shilluk spatial ambient. This tripartite division of the universe into earth, sky, and river, corresponds, of course, to the real categories which anyone in Shilluk country is bound in some way to acknowledge, and in which he is bound on some occasions to think. The savannah country is without mountains, ravines, forests, or other distinctive natural features which might diversify its general contours, and strike the imagination forcibly enough to modify the clarity of the simple, primary distinctions which a man observes in the natural world around him. In such a land, where there is nothing of any size to break the horizon, the sky does indeed become apparent as separate region, almost a place, in relation to the earth. Besides these, there is the river, reflecting both earth and sky. The crops and grass, on which the Shilluk and their herds depend, require that the sky should send rain and the river should rise, and they also need the fish which the river contains. The three regions of earth, sky, and river have values and associations which make the division significant in Shilluk religion and cosmology, as well as in their economy. Their Nilotic neighbours live in a country which, generally, is not unlike their own. The real foreigners come from country of different and inferior quality. Among the Dinka and Nuer also it is thought that the real foreigners come from a country different in nature from their own.

Legends of Nyikang

Legends of the birth and wanderings of Nyikang do not suggest that they occurred in a country very different from that in which the Shilluk now live, but it was a long way away from the present Shilluk kingdom. We are told that the land of Duwat, or the land of Kero, from which the Shilluk

[1] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 238. The details may be Christian.
[2] Ibid., p. 366. [3] Ibid., p. 364. [4] 1925, p. 399.

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
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APPENDIX V.

THE CHARACTER OF THE SHILLUK AND SOME OF THEIR CONVENTIONS.

177 The most striking Shilluk characteristic is pride of race, from which most other features of their character spring. Their intense conservatism, for example, results from a conviction that everything not Shilluk in origin is inevitably bad. Their much complained of insolence results from their belief that they are every bit as good as the foreigner and just a little better because he has that great initial handicap of not being a Shilluk. It is remarkable that so few Shilluk can understand Arabic considering that no Shilluk village is more than thirty miles from either Tonga, Malakal, Kodok or Kaka, where Arabic is spoken and that from early times their contact with the north has been incessant if not always of the happiest. The *Reth's* chief policeman, an intelligent man who acts as his agent in Malakal and is constantly in attendance at the office, can speak no Arabic.

177 Nor is the cause simply lack of intelligence and adaptability. When a Shilluk leaves the tribe and becomes, for example, a Medical Assistant in Malakal or Tonga he dresses in western fashion because otherwise he would be laughed at. Likewise in such circumstances his children will wear seamed garments like the children of the townspeople. But as soon as he goes back to his village, whether on leave or retirement, he at once resumes the traditional tribal dress. Those who have had an opportunity to compare their intelligence with that of the Dinka, Nuer and northern Sudanese say that they are slightly more intelligent than the Nuer or the Dinka and about equal in ability to the Northerner. Certainly the Shilluk who know the English language speak it well, and it cannot be said that they are bad linguists in face of such examples as that of a notorious *Kwanyireth* of medical connexion who speaks English, Arabic, Dinka, Nuer and Anuak with great fluency and gets along adequately in Murle. Pure conservatism and the fact that all local merchants speak Shilluk accounts for the almost non-existent progress made by the Arabic language in a century of contact.

181 Disobedience, insubordination and insolence are according to many the chief Shilluk vices. The first two, although no doubt very

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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Chapter VI

SHILLUK GOVERNMENT

[43] Such is the relation of the Shilluk land to the lands of neighbouring peoples and to the great countries and powers of the modern world. Yet of these latter the Shilluk thinks very little. To him, his country is the world, and its government is all-important to his well-being. That government, [42] and indeed all concept of authority, is centred in the person of the Shilluk king.

'*L'état, c'est moi!*' No French monarch ever uttered that dictum with more assurance than a Shilluk king might have done had he ever heard of it, and thought it worth while to put into words what to him and all the Shilluk was a self-evident truth. Indeed, if a Shilluk were to enunciate his concept of the royal dignity, he would go much further than [42] merely to say that the king is the state, in the sense that he is an absolute monarch who rules his people according to his own dictates, who heeds not, indeed does not need, the advice of counsellors; who merely has to state his wishes for those wishes immediately to have the effect of law. He would indeed claim such despotic power on behalf of his king, though, lest some myrmidon of the Government was within hearing, he would hasten to add that it was no longer exercised and that no modern Shilluk monarch would in fact rule his country in so arbitrary a manner, yet would further aver that the king of the Shilluk is the state, in a way, and to a degree, that no European Monarch ever was; that to say that he ruled by the 'divine right of kings' would be something of an understatement; that he was king, not merely by divine authority and approbation, but that he was a divine king. For every Shilluk king has been and must [186] be a descendant of Nyikang, the great deified hero-king of the Shilluk.

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

*797 others were taken to Omdurman and kept there as prisoners for ten years. The missionaries in Khartoum fled to Cairo, there to await the freeing of the Sudan by Anglo-Egyptian forces.

The revolt was suppressed in 1898, and it was only then that it became possible to carry out Mgr. Comboni's desire. In the beginning of December, 1900, Mgr. Roveggio, with Fathers Tappi and Ortwalder, left Khartoum in the mission boat *Redemptor* to explore the possibilities of founding a mission. They had decided to search in Dinka country, but the boatmen made a mistake and landed them on the Shilluk side of the river. Arriving at Fashoda, they sent a delegation to the king who answered that he would come himself to see them, but in the meantime needed a bottle of brandy as he was not well. When the king finally came on board, Mgr. Roveggio asked his permission to begin a mission among the Shilluk. The king consented and gave them a site at Tonga, far to the south. The missionaries then continued their journey to inspect the place the king had given them, and decided to accept it, but on their return they found that he had changed his mind and now wished them to settle at Lul, not far from his residence, as he thought that it would be more to his advantage to have them near at hand. On February 11th, Fathers Tappi and Huber went to live in the new mission station, the first established among the Shilluk.

*797 The beginnings of the mission were exceedingly difficult. ● 186 Father Stang explained later: 'The Shilluk always speak 798 badly of "foreigners", and despise everything which is not Shilluk, and this for two reasons: their pride in their own nation and the great suffering caused them by the Arabs and Mahdists.' The people would not go near the mission, and the old men and women kept away the curious children by telling them that the white men only wanted them as slaves, or would kill them to make poisons out of their blood. On July 7th, 1901, two of the mission huts were set on fire and only the timely arrival of Father Beduschi with supplies on July 24th saved the priests who had been left without shelter and food and tools. Ten years later the same Father wrote:

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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'When Father Tappi and I started the first mission among the Shilluk at Lul, they did not want us; they hated us and twice attempted to kill us.' During the first few months the natives twice attempted to take their lives by throwing spears at them. One of their greatest troubles was the learning of the language, a tongue absolutely unknown to Europeans. The Shilluk could not bear the thought that foreigners should learn their language and did all they could to prevent them from doing so. They answered their questions falsely, and laughed scornfully at the attempts of the missionaries to write down the strange words; twice, too, they set fire to their houses so as to destroy their work. With time this difficulty was overcome, but even when the people could understand them they refused to listen to what they had to say. 'How is it possible,' they asked, 'for there to be anything good in heaven? Even the birds come down to eat so as not to die of hunger. We Shilluk are made to eat and dance; you foolish men can have your heaven.' They ran away from men so cruel as to wear on their breasts a cross with a man fixed to it. Alone in their mud huts, often hungry and often ill with malaria, the missionaries had only their faith and their trust in God to keep them at their posts. The health of the laybrothers became seriously impaired and yet not one Shilluk would come to work for them. To add to their troubles, the rains stopped earlier than usual that year and all their crops were ruined; the work they had done was wasted, and they were left even without seed to plant.

Little by little, however, the natives began to approach the mission, first out of curiosity to see the work the white men were doing, and then to beg, whilst the king showed his interest by sending occasionally for a bottle of brandy, some money or some other present. At the same time the missionaries began to gain a reputation as doctors and were thus able to make friends with some of the people and baptize some children before they died. In 1903 the king deigned to visit the mission and stayed the night with the Fathers; he ordered the nearby villagers to send milk and instructed